

CHAPTER 1.3.3.

EVALUATION OF VETERINARY SERVICES

Article 1.3.3.2.

**Fundamental principles of quality**

The *Veterinary Services* shall comply with the following principles to ensure the quality of their activities:

1. Professional judgement

The officials of *Veterinary Services* should have the relevant qualifications, scientific expertise and experience to give them the competence to make sound professional judgements.

2. Independence

Care shall be taken to ensure that *Veterinary Services'* staff are free from any commercial, financial, hierarchical, political or other pressures which might affect their judgement or decisions.

3. Impartiality

The *Veterinary Services* shall be impartial. In particular, all the parties affected by their activities have a right to expect their services to be delivered under reasonable and non-discriminatory conditions.

4. Integrity

The *Veterinary Services* shall guarantee that the work of each of their officials is of a consistently high level of integrity. Any fraud, corruption or falsification shall be identified and corrected.

5. Objectivity

The *Veterinary Services* shall at all times act in an objective, transparent and non-discriminatory manner.

6. General organisation

The *Veterinary Services* must be able to demonstrate by means of an appropriate legislation and organisation that they are in a position to have control of the establishment and application of animal health measures, and of international veterinary certification activities. Legislation should be suitably flexible to allow changing situations to be addressed efficiently, including the incorporation of animal welfare and food safety measures. In particular, they shall define and document the responsibilities and structure of the organisations in charge of the animal identification system, control of animal movements, animal disease control and reporting systems, epidemiological surveillance and communication of epidemiological information.

## Appendix XVII (cont'd)

A similar demonstration should be made by *Veterinary Services* when they are in charge of veterinary public health activities.

The *Veterinary Services* shall have at their disposal effective systems for animal disease surveillance and for *notification* of disease problems wherever they occur, in accordance with the provisions of the *Terrestrial Code*. Adequate coverage of animal populations should also be demonstrated. They shall at all times endeavour to improve their performance in terms of animal health information systems and animal disease control.

The *Veterinary Services* shall define and document the responsibilities and structure of the organisation (in particular the chain of command) in charge of issuing *international veterinary certificates*.

Each position within the *Veterinary Services* which has an impact on their quality shall be described. These job descriptions shall include the requirements for education, training, technical knowledge and experience.

### 7. Quality policy

The *Veterinary Services* shall define and document their policy and objectives for, and commitment to, quality, and shall ensure that this policy is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels in the organisation. Where conditions allow, they may implement a quality system corresponding to their areas of activity and appropriate for the type, range and volume of work that they have to perform. The guidelines for the quality and evaluation of *Veterinary Services* propose a suitable reference system, which should be used if a Member Country choose to adopt a quality system.

### 8. Procedures and standards

The *Veterinary Services* shall develop and document appropriate procedures and standards for the implementation and management of animal health measures and international veterinary certification activities. These procedures and standards may for example relate to:

- a) programming and management of activities, including international veterinary certification activities;
- b) prevention and control of disease *outbreaks*;
- c) risk analysis, epidemiological surveillance and zoning;
- d) inspection and sampling techniques;
- e) diagnostic tests for animal diseases;
- f) preparation, production, registration and control of biological products for use in the diagnosis or prevention of diseases;
- g) border controls and import regulations;
- h) *disinfection* and *disinfestation*;
- i) treatments intended to destroy, if appropriate, pathogens in animal products.

j) standards for registration of slaughter establishments.

Inasmuch as the OIE has adopted standards on these matters, the *Veterinary Services* shall comply with these standards when applying animal health measures and when issuing *international veterinary certificates*.

9. Information, complaints and appeals

The *Veterinary Administration* shall undertake to reply to legitimate requests from *Veterinary Administrations* of other Member Countries or any other authority, in particular ensuring that any requests for information, complaints or appeals that they may present are dealt with in a timely manner.

A record shall be maintained of all complaints and appeals and of the relevant action taken by the *Veterinary Services*.

10. Documentation

The *Veterinary Services* shall have at their disposal a reliable and up to date documentation system suited to their activities.

11. Self-evaluation

The *Veterinary Services* should undertake periodical self-evaluation especially by documenting achievements against goals, and demonstrating the efficiency of their organisational components and resource adequacy.

A Member Country can request the Director General of the OIE to arrange for an expert or experts to assist in the process.

12. Communication

*Veterinary Services* should have effective internal and external systems of communication covering administrative and technical staff levels and parties affected by their activities.

---

CHAPTER 1.3.4.

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF  
VETERINARY SERVICES

Article 1.3.4.1.

**General considerations**

1. Evaluation of *Veterinary Services* is an important element in the risk analysis process which countries may legitimately use in their policy formulations directly applying to animal health and sanitary controls of *international trade in animals*, animal-derived products, animal genetic material and animal feedstuffs.

Any evaluation should be carried out with due regard for Chapter 1.3.3. of the *Terrestrial Code*.

2. In order to ensure that objectivity is maximised in the evaluation process, it is essential for some standards of discipline to be applied. The OIE has developed these guidelines which can be practically applied to the evaluation of *Veterinary Services*. These are relevant for evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of one country by those of another country for the purposes of risk analysis in *international trade*. The guidelines are also applicable for evaluation by a country of its own *Veterinary Services* – the process known as self-evaluation or self-assessment– and for periodic re-evaluation.

In carrying out a risk analysis prior to deciding the sanitary/zoosanitary conditions for the importation of a *commodity*, an *importing country* is justified in regarding its evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of the *exporting country* as critical.

3. The purpose of evaluation may be either to assist a national authority in the decision-making process regarding priorities to be given to its own *Veterinary Services* (self-evaluation) or to assist the process of risk analysis in *international trade in animals* and animal-derived products to which official sanitary and/or zoosanitary controls apply.
4. In both situations, the evaluation should demonstrate that the *Veterinary Services* have the capability for effective control of the sanitary and zoosanitary status of *animals* and animal products. Key elements to be covered in this process include resource adequacy, management capability, legislative and administrative infrastructures, independence in the exercise of official functions and performance history, including disease reporting.
5. Competence and integrity are qualities on which others base their confidence in individuals or organisations. Mutual confidence between relevant official *Veterinary Services* of trading partner countries contributes fundamentally to stability in *international trade in animals* and animal-related products. In this situation, scrutiny is directed more at the *exporting country* than at the *importing country*.
6. Although quantitative data can be provided on *Veterinary Services*, the ultimate evaluation will be essentially qualitative. While it is appropriate to evaluate resources and infrastructure (organisational, administrative and legislative), it is also appropriate to place emphasis on the evaluation of the quality of outputs and performance of *Veterinary Services*. Evaluation should take into consideration any quality systems used by *Veterinary Services*.

7. An *importing country* has a right of assurance that information on sanitary/zoosanitary situations provided by the *Veterinary Services* of an *exporting country* is objective, meaningful and correct. Furthermore, the *Veterinary Services* of the *importing country* are entitled to expect validity in the veterinary certification of export.
8. An *exporting country* is entitled to expect that its *animals* and animal products will receive reasonable and valid treatment when they are subjected to import inspection in the country of destination. The country should also be able to expect that any evaluation of its standards and performance will be conducted on a non-discriminatory basis. The *importing country* should be prepared and able to defend any position which it takes as a consequence of the evaluation.
9. While the *veterinary statutory body* is not a part of the *Veterinary Services*, an evaluation of that body should be carried out to ensure that the registration/licensing of veterinarians and para-professionals is included as an important element of the risk analysis process.

Article 1.3.4.2.

**Scope**

1. In the evaluation of *Veterinary Services*, the following items may be considered, depending on the purpose of the evaluation:
  - organisation, structure and authority of the *Veterinary Services*
  - human resources
  - material (including financial) resources
  - functional capabilities and legislative support
  - animal health and veterinary public health controls
  - formal quality systems including quality policy
  - performance assessment and audit programmes
  - participation in OIE activities and compliance with OIE Member Countries' obligations.
2. To complement the evaluation of *Veterinary Services*, it is necessary to also consider the organisation structure and functioning of the *veterinary statutory body*.
3. Article 1.3.4.13. outlines appropriate information requirements for:
  - self-evaluation by national *Veterinary Services* which perceive a need to prepare information for national or international purposes;
  - evaluation by a prospective or actual *importing country* of the *Veterinary Services* of a prospective or actual *exporting country*;
  - verification or re-verification of an evaluation in the course of a visit to the *exporting country* by the *importing country*.

Article 1.3.4.5.

**Evaluation criteria for human resources**

1. The *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate that their human resource component includes an integral core of full-time civil service employees. This core must include graduate veterinarians, para-professionals ~~It should also and should include other qualified professional officers, and administrative officials and technical support staff.~~ The human resources ~~does not exclude~~ should also include the possibility of employing, in addition, part-time veterinarians and para-professionals ~~and para-veterinary staff,~~ and private sector veterinarians and para-professionals. It is essential that all the above categories of staff be subject to legal disciplinary provisions. Data relating to the resource base of the *Veterinary Services* undergoing evaluation should be available.
2. In addition to raw quantitative data on this resource base, the functions of the various categories of staff in the *Veterinary Services* should be described in detail. This is necessary for analysis and estimation of the appropriateness of the application of qualified skills to the tasks undertaken by the *Veterinary Services* and may be relevant, for example, to the roles of veterinarians and ~~animal health technical assistants~~ health para-professionals in field services. In this case, the evaluation should provide assurances that disease monitoring is being conducted by a sufficient number of qualified, experienced field veterinarians who are directly involved in farm visits; there should not be an over-reliance on ~~technical assistant staff~~ para-professionals for this task.
3. Analysis of these data can be used to estimate the potential of the *Veterinary Services* to have reliable knowledge of the state of animal health in the country and to support an optimal level of animal disease control programmes. A large population of private veterinarians ~~practitioners~~ would not provide the *Veterinary Services* with an effective epizootiological information base without legislative (e.g. compulsory reporting of notifiable diseases) and administrative (e.g. official animal health surveillance and reporting systems) mechanisms in place.
4. These data should be assessed in close conjunction with the other information described in this Chapter. For example, a large field staff (veterinarians and para-professionals ~~animal health technical assistants~~) need fixed, mobile and budgetary resources for animal health activities in the livestock farming territory of the country. If deficiencies are evident, there would be reason to challenge the validity of epizootiological information.

Article 1.3.4.7.

**Functional capabilities and legislative support**

1. Animal health and veterinary public health

The *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that they have the capacity, supported by appropriate legislation, to exercise control over all animal health matters. These controls should include, where appropriate, compulsory notification of prescribed animal diseases, inspection, movement controls including registration of holdings and animal identification, quarantine of infected premises/areas, testing, treatment, destruction of infected *animals* or contaminated materials, controls over the use of veterinary medicines, etc. The scope of the legislative controls should include domestic animals and their reproductive material, animal products, wildlife as it relates to the transmission of diseases to domestic animals, and other products subject to veterinary inspection. Arrangements should exist for co-operation with the veterinary

authorities of the neighbouring countries for the control of animal diseases in border areas and for establishing linkages to recognise and regulate trans-boundary activities, including the movements of veterinarians and para-professionals. Information on the veterinary public health legislation covering the production of products of animal origin for national consumption may be also considered in the evaluation.

2. Export/import inspection

National *Veterinary Services* should have appropriate legislation and adequate capabilities to prescribe the methods for control and to exercise systematic control over the import and export processes of *animals* and animal products in so far as this control relates to sanitary and zoosanitary matters. The evaluation should also involve the consideration of administrative instructions to ensure the enforcement of *importing country* requirements during the pre-export period.

In the context of production for export of foodstuffs of animal origin, the *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate that comprehensive legislative provisions are available for the oversight by the relevant authorities of the hygienic process and to support official inspection systems of these *commodities* which function to standards consistent with or equivalent to relevant Codex Alimentarius and OIE standards.

Control systems should be in place which permit the exporting *Veterinary Authorities* to approve export premises. The *Veterinary Services* should also be able to conduct testing and treatment as well as to exercise controls over the movement, handling and storage of exports and to make inspections at any stage of the export process. The product scope of this export legislation should include, *inter alia*, *animals* and animal products (including animal semen, ova and embryos), and animal feedstuffs.

The national *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that they have adequate capabilities and legislative support for zoosanitary control of imports and transit of *animals*, animal products and other materials which may introduce animal diseases. This could be necessary to support claims by the *Veterinary Services* that the animal health status of the country is suitably stable, and that cross-contamination of exports from imports of unknown or less favourable zoosanitary status is unlikely. The same considerations should apply in respect of veterinary control of public health. The *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate that there is no conflict of interest when certifying veterinarians are performing official duties.

Legislation should also provide the right to deny and/or withdraw official certification. Penalty provisions applying to malpractice on the part of certifying officials should be included.

The *Veterinary Services* should demonstrate that they are capable of providing accurate and valid certification for exports of *animals* and animal products, based on Section 1.2. of the *Terrestrial Code*. They should have appropriately organised procedures which ensure that sanitary/animal health certificates are issued by efficient and secure methods. The documentation control system should be able to correlate reliably the certification details with the relevant export consignments and with any inspections to which the consignments were subjected.

Security in the export certification process, including electronic documentation transfer, is important. A system of independent compliance review is desirable, to safeguard against fraud

in certification by officials and by private individuals or corporations. The certifying veterinarian should have no conflict of interest in the commercial aspects of the animal or product being certified and be independent from the commercial parties.

Article 1.3.4.9.

**Veterinary public health controls**

1. Food hygiene

The national *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate effective responsibility for the veterinary public health programmes relating to the production and processing of animal products, especially for export. If the national *Veterinary Services* do not exercise responsibility over these programmes, the evaluation should include a comprehensive review of the role and relationship of the organisations (national, state/provincial, and municipal) which are involved. In such a case, the evaluation should consider whether the national *Veterinary Services* can provide guarantees of responsibility for and effective control of the sanitary status of animal products prior to export, especially *meat* and *meat products* throughout the slaughter, processing, transport and storage periods.

2. Zoonoses

Within the structure of *Veterinary Services*, there should be appropriately qualified staff whose responsibilities include the monitoring and control of zoonotic diseases and, where appropriate, liaison with medical authorities.

3. Chemical residue testing programmes

Adequacy of controls over chemical residues in exported *animals*, animal products and feedstuffs should be demonstrated. Statistically-based surveillance and monitoring programmes for environmental and other chemical contaminants in *animals*, in animal-derived foodstuffs and in animal feedstuffs should be favourably noted. These programmes should be coordinated nationwide. Correlated results should be freely available on request to existing and prospective trading partner countries. Analytical methods and result reporting should be consistent with internationally recognised standards. If official responsibility for these programmes does not rest with the *Veterinary Services*, there should be appropriate provision to ensure that the results of such programmes are made available to the *Veterinary Services* for assessment.

4. Veterinary medicines

It should be acknowledged that primary control over veterinary medicinal products may not rest with the veterinary authorities in some countries, owing to differences between governments in the division of legislative responsibilities. However, for the purpose of evaluation, the *Veterinary Services* should be able to demonstrate the existence of effective controls (including nationwide consistency of application) over the manufacture or importation, registration, supply and use of veterinary medicines, biologicals and diagnostic reagents, whatever their origin. The control of veterinary medicines has direct relevance to the areas of animal health and public health.

In the animal health sphere, this has particular application to biological products. Inadequate controls on the registration and use of biological products leave the *Veterinary Services* open to



## Appendix XVII (cont'd)

challenge over the quality of animal disease control programmes and over safeguards against animal disease introduction in imported veterinary biological products.

It is valid, for evaluation purposes, to seek assurances of effective government controls over veterinary medicines in so far as these relate to the public health risks associated with residues of these chemicals in *animals* and animal-derived foodstuffs. This process should be consistent with the standards set by the Codex Alimentarius or with alternative requirements set by the *importing country* where the latter are scientifically justified.

### 5. Integration between animal health controls and veterinary public health

The existence of any organised programme which incorporates a structured system of information feedback from inspection in fresh meat or dairy product establishments and applies this in animal health control should be favourably noted. Such programmes should be integrated within a national epizootiological surveillance scheme.

*Veterinary Services* which direct a significant element of their animal health programmes specifically towards minimising microbial and chemical contamination of animal-derived products in the human food chain should receive favourable recognition in the evaluation. There should be evident linkage between these programmes and the official control of veterinary medicines and relevant agricultural chemicals.

### Article 1.3.4.11. bis

#### **Evaluation of veterinary statutory body**

In the evaluation of the *veterinary statutory body*, the following items may be considered, depending on the purpose of the evaluation:

- = human resources, including the appropriateness of the body's membership for veterinarians and para-professionals;
- = financial resources;
- = functional capabilities, including the ability to enforce its decisions (for example regarding standards of conduct, deregistration);
- = administration of continuing education programmes for veterinarians and para-professionals;
- = legislative basis, including autonomy;
- = decision-making procedures, including transparency.

### Article 1.3.4.13.

This Article outlines appropriate information requirements for the self-evaluation or evaluation of the *Veterinary Services* of a country.

1. Organisation and structure of Veterinary Services

a) National Veterinary Services

Organisational chart including numbers, positions and numbers of vacancies.

b) Sub-national Veterinary Services

Organisational charts including numbers, positions and number of vacancies.

c) Other providers of Veterinary Services

Description of any linkage with other providers of *Veterinary Services*.

2. National information on human resources

a) Veterinarians

i) Total numbers of:

- veterinarians registered in the country who are graduates from internationally recognised veterinary schools which are registered accordingly in the WHO/FAO World Directory of Veterinary Schools;
- graduate veterinarians not included above.

ii) Numbers of:

- full time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- part time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- private veterinarians authorised by the *Veterinary Services* to perform official veterinary functions [*Describe accreditation standards, responsibilities and/or limitations applying to these private veterinarians*];

= other veterinarians.

iii) Animal health:

Numbers associated with farm livestock sector on a majority time basis in a veterinary capacity, by geographical area [*Show categories and numbers to differentiate staff involved in field service, laboratory, administration, import/export and other functions, as applicable*]:

- full time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- part time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- ~~privately employed~~ other veterinarians.

iv) Veterinary public health:

## Appendix XVII (cont'd)

Numbers employed in food inspection on a majority time basis, by commodity [*Show categories and numbers to differentiate staff involved in inspection, laboratory and other functions, as applicable*]:

- full time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- part time government veterinarians: national and sub-national;
- ~~privately employed~~ other veterinarians.

v) Numbers of veterinarians relative to certain national indices:

- per total human population;
- per farm livestock population, by geographical area;
- per livestock-farming unit, by geographical area.

vi) Veterinary education:

- number of veterinary schools;
- length of veterinary course (years);
- international recognition of veterinary degree.

b) Graduate staff (non-veterinary)

Details to be provided by category (including biologists, biometricians, economists, engineers, lawyers, other science graduates and others) on numbers within national *Veterinary Services* and available to national *Veterinary Services*.

c) ~~Technical assistants~~ Para-professionals employed by the *Veterinary Services*

i) Animal health:

- Categories and numbers involved with farm livestock on a majority time basis:
  - . by geographical area;
  - . proportional to numbers of field Veterinary Officers in the *Veterinary Services*, by geographical area.
- Education/training details.

ii) Veterinary public health:

- Categories and numbers involved in food inspection on a majority time basis:
  - . meat inspection: export meat establishments with an export function and domestic meat establishments (no export function);

Appendix XVII (cont'd)

- . dairy inspection;
  - . other foods.
  - Numbers in import/export inspection.
  - Education/training details.
- d) Support staff
- Numbers directly available to *Veterinary Services* per sector (administration, communication, transport).
- e) Descriptive summary of the functions of the various categories of staff mentioned above
- f) Additional information and/or comments.
-